DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 189 219 UD 020 701

AUTHOR Kinder, Donald R.; Sears, David O.
TITLE Symbolic Racism Versus Racial Threats to "The Good Life."
PUB DATE [78]
NOTE 71p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Black Stereotypes; Elections; Etiology; *Racial Attitudes; *Racial Bias; *Social Psychology; Surveys; Voting; *Whites
IDENTIFIERS California (Los Angeles)

ABSTRACT

The goals of this research were to identify the key political forms of contemporary white racism, to investigate their social psychological antecedents, and to do both in a way that discriminated among several theoretical approaches to understanding prejudice: realistic group conflict theory, displacement theory, and a "symbolic" analysis of racism. The analysis was based upon survey data collected in suburban Los Angeles during two elections, four years apart, in which racial issues were of paramount importance. Findings indicated that symbolic racism was the major determinant of anti-black voting in both elections, both for people removed from possible personal threats posed by blacks and those more personally vulnerable. Direct racial threats to whites' private lives were found to be largely irrelevant to racism. The origins of symbolic racism appeared to lie in preadult socialization of racial predisposition and moral values. (Author/MK)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

MAY 2 7 1980

ED189219

Symbolic Racism versus Racial Threats to "The Good Life"

Donald R. Kinder

Yale University

David O. Sears

University of California, Los Angeles

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Donald R. Kinder

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

UD020701

Running head: Symbolic Racism versus Racial Threat

Abstract

While theories of prejudice have been extensively catalogued (e.g., Allport, 1954), empirical confrontations between competing theories is surprisingly rare and may even be diminishing. The goals of this research were to identify the key political forms of contemporary white racism, to investigate their social psychological antecedents, and to do both in a way that tests pointedly among several general theoretical approaches to understanding prejudice: realistic group conflict theory (emphasizing the importance of tangible racial threats to private life); displacement theory (emphasizing the role of tangible racial threats to private life); displacement theory (emphasizing the role of manifestly non-racial personal discontents); and a "symbolic" analysis of racism (emphasizing abstract, moralistic resentments of blacks). Our analysis is based upon survey data collected in suburban Los Angeles during two elections matching the same two candidates, four years apart, in which racial issues were of paramount importance. We found symbolic racism--a mix of anti-black affect and traditional moral values--to be the major determinant of anti-black voting in both elections, both for people removed from possible personal threats posed by blacks as well as for those more personally vulnerable. Direct racial threats to white's private lives were largely irrelevant to racism, either in accounting for anti-black voting behavior, or in producing symbolically racist attitudes in contradiction of realistic group conflict theory. Similarly, neither anti-black voting nor symbolic racism arose from nonracial discontents in whites' private lives, evidence that challenges displacement theories of prejudice, Finally, the origins of symbolic racism appeared to lie in the preadult socialization of racial predispositions and moral values (though our evidence on this point is rather indirect). The paper closes with a discussion on the generality of these results and their implications for theories of prejudice, and with speculations about a broader symbolic analysis of politics.

Symbolic Racism versus Racial Threats to "The Good Life"

Race as a public issue has changed dramatically in the period since World War II. Jackie Robinson's struggle to be the first black to play major league baseball, or George Wallace's defiant stand in the doorway at the University of Alabama, symbolized efforts to grant blacks equal rights throughout an American society that was heavily segregated, deliberately and self-consciously so. The issue then was intentional discrimination. The struggle was to force institutions, and white people in general, to be indifferent to race.

With the passage of the landmark civil rights legislation of the early 1960's, along with its judicial and executive implementation in the years immediately following, the battleground in the political struggle for racial equality in the United States shifted. No longer was de jure segregation at issue; institutions, public and private, were no longer permitted to discriminate against blacks on an explicit basis. The struggle for racial progress concentrates now on persuading and coercing institutions to be actively egalitarian and integrated, rather than passively indifferent to race. The criterion for success now is not equal access for blacks and whites, but proportionate representation. The symbols now are Allan Bakke, school buses, and the enforcement of racial balances and quotas, not "colored only" signs.

Coincident with this change in the focus of racial policy issues has been an equally profound shift in the manifest content of white racism. Opposition to formal racial equality on such matters as voting rights, public accommodations, separate schools, employment practices, and fair housing, has nearly disappeared

(Greeley & Sheatsley, 1973). Racial prejudice has not disappeared, however. Far from it. But the focus has shifted. Public debate on racial matters now seems to center on what we have called "symbolic racism" (Sears & Kinder, Note 1; Sears & Kinder, 1971; Sears & McConahay, 1973; McConahay & Hough, 1976).

Symbolic racism has a number of distinguishing characteristics. Its content mixes anti-black affect (primarily anxiety and hostility) with traditional American moral values (primarily individualism and self-reliance, though with tinges of the work ethic, impulse control, the value of obedience and discipline, and other vestiges of the Protestant ethic)[1]. Whites' racial indignation is over the sense that blacks are advancing unfairly; that they are playing by a different and easier set of rules. Symbolic racism therefore is expressed most clearly on such issues as welfare (blacks are lazy), affirmative action (blacks have not "earned" their status), busing (whites deserve their neighborhood schools), and crime in the streets (blacks do not obey the law). Symbolic racism is so named because it is attached to general, abstract symbols ("welfare," "busing"). As such, it should carry important consequences whenever it intrudes into electoral politics. The symbols are powerful (they touch important values), and they can so easily be joined to candidates or to policy questions.

The general phenomenon under investigation here is whites' response to race as an issue in the public arena; that is, to racial issues in a political context. The central problems are two: to identify the socio-psychological antecedents of contemporary white racism, and to identify the antecedents of racist political response.

Our analysis of symbolic racism suggests specific possibilities on both counts. Symbolic racism is basically rooted in feelings of morality and propriety; the concern is over what is moral or ethical for the society at large.

And it is expressed in terms of remote, abstract, generalized symbols. So the antecedents of symbolic racism, and its political consequences, should have little to do with the direct impact of racial issues upon the white person's private life, or with other nonracial frustrations and tensions the person experiences. Rather, the potent socio-psychological dynamics should be those concerned with the acquisition of longstanding moral and social values. On the problem of the origins of racism, then, the symbolic racism approach appeals essentially to preadult socialization. It suggests that people acquire their prejudices primarily in the cultural context of childhood and adolescence. The basic process presumably is the conditioning of positive or negative affects to specific symbols. Hence "Negroes" or "blacks" or "Harlem," or "Watts" acquire positive or negative affect as a result of the social norms that dominate the individual's early environment. The general implication here is that, in adulthood, whites compartmentalize their judgments about race as a public issue from their feelings about their private lives--from racial threats to personal life as well as from non-racial frustrations and discontents.

A symbolic perspective on racism differs sharply from two other general theoretical approaches that can be distilled from the massive literature on prejudice. The first is "realistic group conflict theory," which locates the origins of racism in the direct competition between groups for scarce resources. According to this view, competitive interdependence produces the (realistic) perception of threat, which in turn leads to hostility directed at members of the threatening group as well as to solidarity within the threatened group.

This approach has been described, at about the same level of generality, as the "self-interest" (Sears, Hensler, and Speer, Note 2) or "instrumental" (Katz, 1960) theory of attitude formation: people adopt attitudes that further their own private interests. When applied to prejudice, this approach might best be described as a "direct racial threat" hypothesis. Whites develop antagonistic attitudes toward blacks to the extent that blacks threaten (or are perceived as threatening) their private well-being.

Surprisingly enough, this racial threat hypothesis has rarely been directly tested, perhaps because it seems so obvious. Evidence that the perception of threat leads to racial prejudice comes from essentially only four types of research: (1) aggregate correlation analyses: e.g., those indicating that among Southern whites, prejudice increases as the relative size of the nearby black population increases (Blalock, 1967; Key, 1949; Pettigrew & Cramer, 1959); (2) group differences: observations of greater prejudice in groups in seemingly greater economic competition with the minority (e.g., working class whites are more prejudiced than are middle class whites); (3) informal time-series observations of changes in group stereotypes; e.g., changes in American attitudes toward the Japanese after Pearl Harbor (this evidence is reviewed by Ashmore, 1970, and by Ehrlich, 1973); and (4) experiments on competitive interdependence, the best known of which is Sherif's (1961) field experiment varying competitive vs cooperative interdependence between groups of school boys at a summer camp.

Even taken together, this evidence hardly constitutes compelling support for the racial threat hypothesis. Some of the tests are quite indirect, others suggest major alternative interpretations, and the external validity of the

experimental work has not been adequately explored. Existing evidence simply does not permit any informed estimate of how direct racial threats influence whites' racial attitudes in contemporary America.

One concrete goal of this study was, therefore, to perform as intensive and demanding a test as possible of the effects of racial threat. We considered threat in four important areas: (1) neighborhood desegregation and interracial social contact--homogeneously white neighborhoods, or generally all-white social relationships, could be disrupted by greater housing and social integration; (2) personal economic well-being--the individual's own economic and work situation may be damaged by affirmative action hirings, or by redistributive economic policies; by promoting blacks to superior, supervisory positions; (3) neighborhood school desegregation--the white person's own child(ren) and the status of his neighborhood generally, could be affected by desegregation plans that bus white children into minority neighborhoods or bus minorities into previously all-white schools; and (4) crime and violence in the neighborhood.

A second main alternative class of theories focuses on scapegoating or displacement of aggression. In this view, inner conflicts and frustrations in private life, with no manifest connection to racial conflicts, become displaced onto visible and vulnerable minority groups. The frustrated individuals may be insecure, socially isolated, status inconsistent, alienated, anomic, downwardly mobile, generally unhappy, or economically dissatisfied. The crucial point is that whatever its origins, the discontent is displaced in the form of anti-black prejudice.

Evidence on this proposition is also weak. Even the positive data are equivocal, as they come from unsophisticated correlational analyses that invite alternative interpretations (e.g., Adorno et al, 1950); from experimental

inductions of frustration that have proven difficult to replicate, or from suggestive but controversial aggregate analyses (e.g., Hovland & Sears, 1940; for a good summary of this work, see Ashmore & DelBoca, 1976).

A rigorous test of this proposition with survey data requires looking more directly at the impact of non-racial personal tensions, with other relevant contributors to racist attitudes and to racist political responses simultaneously controlled, as we shall do here. These personal nonracial discontents will also be investigated in four separate areas: (1) sense of community, (2) personal economic status, (3) quality of neighborhood schools, and (4) personal safety.

The main goal of the study, then, was to provide a rigorous test of these three general theoretical perspectives--symbolic racism/socialization, racial threat/realistic group conflict, and nonracial discontent/displacement--both in accounting for the antecedents of racism, and for the political consequences of racism. Theories of prejudice have of course been extensively catalogued (e.g., Allport, 1954; Ehrlich, 1973; LeVine & Campbell, 1972). But pointed empirical confrontation between competing theories is surprisingly uncommon. And according to Katz's (1976) review, such confrontations are actually declining. So our main ambition is to formulate questions about the origins and political effects of racism in such a way that alternative theoretical predictions can be directly tested.

Two features unique to our investigation should be underlined. One is our interest in the impact of racism upon whites' political behavior (specifically, their voting behavior), as well as in the origins of racial attitudes. While the study of attitudes for their own sake has a distinguished

history, its value is clearly enhanced if the attitudes can be shown to influence socially important outcomes. So a central element of our research was to test the antecedents and consequences of racism within an electoral context. We were concerned with prejudice not only as a set of attitudes, but as a force with direct impact on which officials hold power and make policy. Hence our analysis relies upon studies conducted during a pair of election campaigns in which racial issues were of paramount importance (as will be demonstrated).

The second is that our investigation includes a complete replication. It is based on similar surveys done in the same area during two elections matching the same two candidates, four years apart. This affords us the luxury--nearly unprecedented for research of this kind--of testing the various theoretical hypotheses twice.

Our strategy for analysis is mapped in Figure 1. Moving from right to left, we first contrast symbolic racism with personal racial threats, and then with nonracial personal discontents as determinants of anti-black voting, to assess the political impact of race. Then we take up the origins of symbolic racism in terms of three general theoretical perspectives, in turn: racial threat, personal discontents, and socialization.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Method

Subjects.

Evidence for this investigation comes from personal interviews with white suburbanites during the 1969 and 1973 campaigns for the mayor's office in Los Angeles, California. In both cases the white conservative incumbent, Samuel

Yorty, was challenged by a liberal black city councilman, Thomas Bradley. Bradley won a plurality in the primary election on each occasion, which narrowed a larger field to these two finalists. In 1969, Yorty won the general election, with 53% of the vote, after a bitter contest. In 1973, Bradley won, taking 56% of the vote. In both years, the interviewing took place after the primary and about three weeks prior to the general election. In 1969, 198 adults were interviewed by the National Opinion Research Center, and in 1973, 239 were, by the Field Corporation.

The sample area was identical in both cases: the first and twelfth councilmanic districts in the City of Los Angeles. Of the fifteen districts in the city, these two comprise the northern half of the San Fernando Valley, and include the communities of Chatsworth, Northridge, Granada Hills, Sylmar, Sunland, and Tujunga. Neighborhoods were chosen with probabilities proportional to their population, with age and sex quotas then imposed (for a fuller description of this mixed sampling design, see Sudman, 1976). The Valley is the largest "bedroom suburb" in the City of Los Angeles, with a population of nearly one million (in 1970). It contains a small black and Chicano community, Pacoima, but in 1970, only 1.69% of the Valley's residents were black. The Valley is separated from the rest of the City by a low mountain range, and is far from any major concentration of blacks (e.g., it is 20 miles from Watts). In demographic terms our respondents were like those in the Valley more generally: mainly suburban, relatively affluent, and middle class. A large majority were homeowners (81% and 87%) with good incomes, and above average levels of education (34% had attended college). Most subjectively identified with the middle class. They were predominantly Protestant, with a substantial Catholic minority and

almost no Jews. Nearly all were married, and most of these were parents (89% and 85%).

Measures.

The primary measures were: non-racial personal discontents, racial threats, preadult socialization, symbolic racism, and candidate preference.

Non-racial personal discontents. Both our surveys included an extensive battery of questions on the subjective quality of private life with no manifest relationship at all to racial conflict. They covered four domains: sense of community, personal economic concerns, appraisal of local public education, and feelings of personal safety and security from crime. These items, and the frequency of discontent on each, are given in Table 1. (Parenthetically, Valley suburbanites seemed generally satisfied with their personal lives--popular sterotypes about the Southern California lifestyle notwithstanding. Most knew their neighbors and found them helpful, were optimistic about their economic futures, and felt quite safe. These findings compare roughly with those obtained nationally; e.g., Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976). The central question here is: what are the political and racial consequences (if any) of frustrations and discontents in suburban private life?

Table 1 about here

Personal racial threats. According to realistic group conflict theory, the politically effective component of racism should be respondents' perceptions of threats posed by blacks to their own personal lives. We assessed racial threat in four areas: (1) neighborhood and community: housing desegregation in the neighborhood, and more intimate social contact with blacks; (2) personal economic

well-being: satisfaction with own economic situation relative to that of blacks, the possibility of having a black supervisor, and of being personally harmed by affirmative action; (3) neighborhood school desegregation: likelihood of blacks being bussed into the neighborhood schools or of white children being bused to minority schools, and having children in the Los Angeles public school system, and (4) personal safety: fear of blacks bringing violence into the neighborhood, and living close to the small black ghetto of Pacoima. The specific items are presented in Table 2, along with the corresponding disbribution of replies to each.

Table 2 about here

Across the four areas, racial threat was measured with two general kinds of questions. The first taps the valence of respondents' affective reactions to a particular racial threat if it were to materialize--for example, their response if their own neighborhoods were to be desegreated. The second set is comprised of probability questions (confined for the most part to the 1973 survey). These questions asked respondents to judge the likelihood that each of several potential personal racial threats would actually materialize--for example, their judgment of the likelihood that black families would soon be moving into their neighborhoods. As shown in Table 2, substantial numbers of suburban respondents felt threatened in each area, though the exact percentage varied considerably across items.

Preadult socialization. The measurement of preadult socialization poses a difficult problem, since it is impossible to directly assess the individual's

preadult values and attitudes. We approached this problem from two angles. The more conservative, but insensitive approach, is to rely on measures of social background that are known to be correlated with the socialization of specific values and attitudes. Hence age, Southern rearing, and education are all known to be associated with the socialization of higher levels of racial prejudice (Campbell, 1971; Maykovich, 1975; Middleton, 1976): similarly, age and education are associated with traditional individualistic values (Inglehart, 1977). To use such measures of social background is admittedly a crude approach to the effects of preadult socialization, but at least their causal status is unequivocal.

The more sensitive, but risky strategy, is to use current attitudes and values on those dimensions that presumably were originally socialized. Hence to index preadult racial prejudice, we use items that are framed in the terms of the racial issues of the 1930's, 1940's, and 1950's: equal access to public accommodations, blacks' intellectual inferiority, school segregation, and fair housing. We term this dimension generalized egalitarianism. This was measured in 1969 with four items: should Negro students be sent to separate schools (8% yes); are Negroes just as intelligent as whites (15% no); should Negroes have the right to use the same public accommodations as whites (3% no); and should whites have the first chance at any job (1% yes). In 1973, the first two items were repeated, with 10% and 16% racist, respectively; and a third item was added, do blacks have the right to live wherever they can afford to, with 7% racist. In both years these were combined in simple additive scales.

To index traditional American values, we use items on the value of thrift and of obedience to authority: "It really doesn't make any sense to save for the future; it's better to spend your money today and enjoy it;" and "obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children can learn," both answered as five-point Likert scales. Responses to the two questions were combined in both years to form additive indexes.

Symbolic racism. The symbolic racism items are shown in Table 3. As indicated earlier, they are characterized by their abstraction, by their moral tone, and by the absence of any reference to the respondent's personal situation, or to general principles of equal rights. To generate measures of symbolic racism, a factor analysis was conducted on the more numerous 1973 set of symbolic racism items. Two main factors emerged. One clearly focused on busing: the five racial busing items loaded from .50 to .81 on it, and less than .20 on the other factor. The second factor was equally distinctive: the remaining nine items loaded from .36 to .65 on it, and only one of them loaded as high as .23 on the busing factor. These latter items referred to a pot pourri of non-busing areas, such as affirmative action, government favoritism, and black activism, so we termed it expressive racism.

We generated two additive scales reflecting the two factors, using the items with the highest loadings, which are starred in Table 3. The scales are not identical in both years, since new questions were added in 1973, but the core of items is the same. The median gamma across items within the busing scale was .63 in 1969, and .65 in 1973; within the expressive racism scale, .43 and .38. Defined in this way, the two indexes of opposition to racial busing and expressive racism represent conceptually separable dimensions of

symbolic racism, though as expected, they are correlated (in 1969, Pearson r = .33; in 1973, r = .39).[2]

Candidate preference. In both surveys, respondents were provided with a list of six trait adjectives, and asked whether or not each described the two candidates, going through the complete list first for Yorty, the white conservative incumbent, and then for Bradley, the black challenger. Three of the traits were positive (honest, intelligent, effective) and three negative (underhanded, unpleasant, corrupt). An evaluative index was formed for each candidate, reflecting the number of positive traits attributed to him minus the number of negative traits attributed (hence ranging from -3 to +3). An overall candidate preference measure was then constructed by subtracting the Yorty index from the Bradley index. In both 1969 and 1973, this measure ranged from -4, indicating a decided preference for Yorty, to +4, indicating a decided preference for Bradley. Respondents were also asked directly who they intended to vote for. In 1969, 45% reported that they intended to vote for Yorty, 43% for Bradley, and 12% were undecided. In 1973, the corresponding percentages were 51% for Yorty, 41% for Bradley, with 8% undecided. Not surprisingly, vote intention was very highly correlated with the overall candidate preference measure (in 1969, Gamma = 90; in 1973, Gamma = .88).

Our analysis of voting behavior will rely upon the trait measure of candidate evaluation, rather than on vote intention, because a nine-point scale is far more sensitive than is a simple dichotomous choice. Furthermore, use of a dichotomous dependent variable in multiple regression analysis violates standard Gauss-Markoff assumptions (Wonnacott & Wonnacott, 1971), rendering estimation and significance testing problematic. And of course, the candidate preference index is an exceedingly good surrogate for vote intention itself,

as indicated by the correlations presented above.

Results

Our initial assertion was that symbolic racism now carries the main political impact of prejudice. This was partly based on the fact that whites have now almost unanimously accepted general principles of equal rights, so there is insufficient racist sentiment in these terms to be of political importance. Our sample resembles the rest of the white public in this respect, almost unanimously endorsing general principles of racial equality. As already indicated, prejudiced responses across our seven racial egalitarian items ranged from 1% to 16% (median 8%). Despite Jensenism, few thought blacks less intelligent than whites; and despite controversy over "forced busing" for school integration, almost no one supported separate schools for blacks. The major political impact of racism must, therefore, stem from dimensions evolving more racist sentiment.

Symbolic racism would seem to fill that bill in our sample. The data, displayed in Table 3, show high frequencies of anti-black attitudes on symbolic issues. Vast majorities were opposed to busing for racial integration and to quotas for black college students. Anywhere from one-third to two-thirds believed that blacks get more than they deserve, push themselves where they are not wanted, milk welfare programs, or get more attention from government than they should.

At the same time, many respondents experienced blacks as directly or potentially threatening their personal lives in a variety of ways, as shown in Table 2. About half thought that they would be personally affected by affirmative action in the near future; 80% thought black families would soon be moving

into their neighborhoods. Almost a third felt their neighborhoods vulnerable to black violence, that blacks' economic gains had exceeded their own, or would object to more intimate social contact with blacks. So, to a considerable number of these respondents, personal safety, economic status, and the sanctity of the home and of the neighborhood were all at stake.

Finally, most respondents indicated satisfaction with their private lives, as shown in Table 1. Nevertheless, in all cases a sufficiently large minority expressed frustration and discontent to provide some reservoir for displaced aggression. Loneliness, financial pessimism, disappointment with schools, and fear for personal safety were all sufficiently common to fuel political discontent.

Determinants of voting behavior.

So formal racial equality no longer draws enough opposition to provide much political clout. But there is clearly enough symbolic racism, sense of personal racial threat, and nonracial personal discontents to do so. So the next question concerns their relative contribution to voting behavior, as an index of their political importance.

Symbolic racism vs. racial threat. We begin by simply comparing the effects of symbolic racism and personal racial threats. Such comparisons clearly show that symbolic racism was the much more important determinant of voting behavior, in both elections, with the more prejudiced supporting the white conservative, Yorty. This can be seen, at a crude level, in the simple bivariate relationships. Symbolic racism had a mean gamma with candidate preference of .41, considering all 21 items included in the two surveys (shown in Table 3). Racial threat, on the other hand, yielded a mean gamma of only .23 over 16 items (shown in Table 2). This last figure is even exaggerated somewhat since it

includes the "valence" threat items in which the threat is only imaginary or hypothetical; e.g., feelings about having blacks (conceivably) move in next door. The items directly tapping real black threats, those assessing the probability of personal racial impact, yielded far lower relationships with the vote: so at this level of analysis, symbolic racism clearly has a much greater impact on the vote.

Bivariate analysis is inadequate for our purposes, though, because of the correlations between the racism measures (especially the valence items measuring affective reactions to possible racial threats and symbolic racism). To sort out the separate contributions of these various dimensions of racism, therefore, it is necessary to turn to multiple regression analysis. In the first pair of these, done separately for the 1969 and 1973 data, the predictor variables were simply symbolic racism and racial threat, represented by indexes where appropriate. The only difference between the two was that the 1973 analysis included the measures of perceived probability of racial threats. The dependent variable in each case was the candidate preference index.

These regressions clearly demonstrate the greater importance of symbolic racism. They are shown in Table 4: Equation 1 includes only symbolic racism, Equation 2 only racial threat, and Equation 3 both sets of variables at once. When both are taken into account, the symbolic racism terms are almost all highly significant (the exception is busing in 1973, where $p < .10$).[3] Opposition to busing and especially expressive resentments directed at blacks made substantial independent contributions to voting. In sharp contrast, only one racial threat term (fear of black violence) reached statistical significance in 1969; none did in 1973.[4]

The greater importance of symbolic racism can be demonstrated in another way, this time by exploiting the hierarchical possibilities of regression analysis. The question here is: do racial threats to personal life add significantly to our ability to predict mayoral voting over and above the contribution made by symbolic racism? The answer is no. Racial threat accounts for virtually no variance not already explained by symbolic racism (2% in 1969, 0% in 1973; subtract the R^2 for Equation 1 from that for Equation 3). When this procedure was reversed, and the measures of personal racial threat entered first, the dominance of symbolic racism is maintained. Symbolic racism accounts for considerable variance not accounted for by racial threat (15% and 9% for the two years, as indicated by subtracting the R^2 for Equation 2 from that for Equation 3). So by several statistical criteria, personal racial threat contributed little to voting; symbolic forms of racism mattered a great deal.

Table 4 about here

Racial threat among the most vulnerable? So far we have considered only the main effects of racial threat, and have not differentiated between the valence and probability measures. But racial threat is more complex than that. One more refined hypothesis is that the two components of threat have interactive effects on voting (Fishbein & Azjen, 1975). That is, the political impact of racial threats ought to be most profound among those most vulnerable to them. The procedure for testing this hypothesis was to determine the impact upon candidate preference of the affective reaction to the threat (e.g., attitudes

toward neighborhood desegregation), separately for people feeling very vulnerable to the threat (e.g., perceiving neighborhood desegregation as likely) and those feeling personally quite invulnerable to the threat (e.g., perceiving it as unlikely). Concretely, the basic regression equation shown in Table 4 (column 3) was re-estimated, separately for respondents at high and at low levels of perceived likelihood of the outcome in question. The regression coefficient for the appropriate threat-related affect (in this example, attitudes toward neighborhood desegregation) upon candidate preference was then taken as the political impact of the personal threat. If the personal manifestation of racial threat is fueling anti-black voting, then these regression coefficients ought to be larger for respondents perceiving the threat as likely than for those perceiving the threat as unlikely.

The results did not turn out this way at all. The evidence consistently disconfirms the threat hypothesis. In fact, affective reactions to potential threats seem to take on political significance precisely for those suburbanites who by their own reports were least threatened! This evidence is shown in Table 5 separately for each of the racial threats we have measured. (We could do this in a pointed way only with the 1973 data, since measures of expected vulnerability to racial threat were for the most part not included in the 1969 survey).

Table 5 about here

Consider first the relationship between opposition to residential desegregation and voting. As indicated in Table 5, resistance to desegregation of the neighborhood was completely unrelated to candidate preference among those

who thought desegregation likely, but was quite sharply (and significantly) associated with vote among those who believed desegregation of their own neighborhoods unlikely. A similar pattern held for proximity to Pacoima, the small black and Chicano Valley community. As mentioned earlier, some of our respondents lived adjacent to Pacoima; others lived as far as 10 miles away. And it was only among those whose own neighborhoods were far removed from blacks for whom opposition to residential desegregation affected the vote (and then only in 1973). Likewise, resistance to social encounters with blacks was at all related to candidate preference among those suburbanites whose own neighborhoods were most <u>secure</u> from desegregation; personal fears of black violence were related to voting most sharply among suburbanites living <u>far</u> from blacks; and personal economic resentments of blacks contributed most to voting for those <u>least</u> personally threatened by racial economic competition.

We also included our symbolic racism measure of opposition to busing in this analysis. It is certainly reasonable to think that having school-age children in the Los Angeles City Unified School District, and thinking local busing a likely prospect, would powerfully combine to fuel race-threatened anti-black voting. But as noted earlier, opposition to busing related relatively weakly to candidate preference in 1973 (see Table 4) and Table 5 shows there is no marked tendency for this relationship to be accentuated among the most vulnerable: parents of school children who thought busing likely. This is further evidence that opposition to busing is a matter of symbolic racism rather than racial threat.

In short, ostensible personal racial threats seem to affect voting most among those <u>least</u> vulnerable to them. To be sure, these are slight tendencies

and should therefore be interpreted cautiously. (In just one case does the multiplicative term that carries the interaction between vulnerability and affect produce a statistically significant increment in the predictability of voting--for the interaction between opposition to residential desegregation and personal vulnerability to neighborhood desegregation.) Nevertheless the consistency of the results is striking. Personal racial threats mattered most for voting as they became less anchored in personal experience--less "realistic" in that sense--and therefore more symbolic.

Symbolic racism among the least vulnerable? A second more refined hypothesis regarding racial threat, and a close companion of the first, suggests that symbolic racism may have important political effects only among people whose own lives are safe from racial change. Ideological or moral thinking may be a luxury that can be afforded only when the issue has no personal consequence; when it does, self-interest may "flood the field," and more instrumental, threat-minimizing responses may dominate one's politics. The appropriate analysis proceeds by the same logic as for those just presented: symbolic racism should have a major effect upon the vote among respondents perceiving personal threats as unlikely, but little effect when threat seems immediate and tangible.

We found no evidence that symbolic racism loses its political clout as racial threats become more realistic. If anything, the opposite is true; as shown in Table 6, there is actually a gentle increase in the relationship between expressive racism and voting as vulnerability increases. Expressive racism seemed to matter slightly more for those whose personal lives were touched most by racial threat--whether defined by living adjacent to blacks; feeling vulnerable to affirmative action programs; and so on. None of the

differences reaches statistical significance, but the direction of effects is exactly counter to this last version of the racial threat hypothesis.

Table 6 about here

Across these several analyses, then, the evidence runs strongly against realistic group conflict theory. First of all, racial threat had barely any effect upon voting preferences, while symbolic racism had a strong effect. Second, unpleasant personal impacts of racial conflict were not more powerful in determining the vote when perceived as most probable. And finally, symbolic racism was equally strongly related to candidate preference among those who felt highly vulnerable to racial threats as among those who felt quite protected from them.

Displacement of personal discontents. A second general theory was that anti-black voting behavior might stem from displaced discontents in the voter's personal life, even when they bore no manifest connection to racial conflicts. Both surveys included a number of questions on the subjective quality of private life in four domains: sense of community, economic well-being, appraisal of local public education, and personal safety. Again there are several versions of the hypothesis. One is that these discontents have simple main effects on voting: the more frustrated might vote more racist. Or discontent might interact with racial prejudice (either symbolic racism or racial threat): frustration might increase racist voting among the prejudiced, who are disposed in that direction anyway, but might not affect voting among the less prejudiced.

It is clear that the first version of the hypothesis is false: non-racial personal discontents had no main effect upon voting at all. There were fourteen

indicators of life satisfaction in 1969, and seventeen in 1973; the mean gammas with candidate preference were -.02 and -.02, respectively (shown in Table 1). Only one had a statistically significant relationship to voting: in 1969 Yorty drew support from those who thought their neighborhoods unsafe for a woman at night (gamma = .30, $p < .05$). But even this solitary finding vanished with statistical controls on symbolic racism. So alienation or estrangement, personal economic disappointments, discontent over the schools, and fear of crime and violence--none of these contributed directly to racist voting.[6]

Nor did personal frustration increase Yorty voting more among the racially prejudiced than among the relatively unprejudiced voters. To test this hypothesis efficiently, a composite life satisfaction measure was generated, based on four items, one from each domain of personal discontent. This was then included in the basic voting regression model (defined by Table 4, columns 3 and 6), along with the multiplicative terms for the its interaction with each of the six measures of prejudice (two of symbolic racism, and four of racial threat). The question is whether these prejudice X discontent interaction terms add significantly to the prediction of candidate preference. They do not: $F < 1$ in both cases, in analyses not shown here. So personal discontents contributed neither directly nor indirectly to racist voting. Private frustrations were just that: important in themselves, but with little significance for racial politics.

Origins of Symbolic Racism

Having observed the powerful political consequences produced by symbolic racism, we turn now to consider its origins. Three general possibilities will be taken up: (1) from realistic group conflict theory, that symbolic racism

is mainly a response to racial threats to personal life; (2) from displaced aggression theory, that symbolic racism is derived, at least in part, from the strains and tensions of contemporary suburban life; and (3) from socialization theory, that symbolic racism is longstanding within each individual's life, dating from preadult origins.

Personal racial threats. To what extent is symbolic racism a reaction to racial matters as they impinged--or threatened to impinge--on private life? First, did opposition to busing stem from the personal threats it might carry? Evidently not. Opposition to racial busing was intense, of course, but this was so independently of personal vulnerability. Busing attitudes were unrelated to whether or not the respondent thought black children were about to be bussed into local schools, whether white children from the neighborhood were soon to be bussed into black schools, or whether they had children in the Los Angeles school system. As shown in Table 7 (column 1), personal vulnerability to threat accounted for an entirely negligible proportion of variance in racial busing attitudes ($R^2 = .000$).

Perhaps a fairer test of the threat hypothesis, though, takes into account the interactions between busing-likelihood and having children in the district. The prediction is that suburbanites who had children in the Los Angeles public school system and who thought busing likely, would be especially intense in their opposition to busing. Evidence on this point is summarized in column 2 of Table 7. As shown there, adding the four multiplicative terms that carry the appropriate interactions to the regression model does produce a statistically significant (if slight) increase in the predictability of racial busing attitudes. (The significance of the increase is given by $F_{4,229} = 3.15$, $p < .05$; Cohen & Cohen, 1975). But it is a curious interaction: suburbanites who believed their

own high school age children were about to become participants in a racial busing program were actually less intensely opposed to busing! In any case, even with the multiplicative terms included, it is clear that personal vulnerability influences attitudes toward racial busing only slightly (R^2 = .030). Opposition to busing did not come disproportionately from the personally vulnerable.

Table 7 about here

The findings are much the same when we turn to expressive racism; it was not much based in racial threat either, as shown in Table 8. Whether suburbanites thought that their own children were about to be swept up in a racial busing program, or thought that desegregation of their neighborhood was imminent; or believed that a black would soon be supervising them at work--none had anything to do with expressive racism. Expecting black children to be increasingly bussed into the respondent's own neighborhood schools was related to greater expressive racism (even though expecting white children to be bused out was not). However this effect dropped out with demographic controls (age, sex, and education). Only one threat effect held up at a significant level: suburbanites who thought it likely that they--or members of their family or their friends--would be denied opportunities for jobs or promotions because of preferential treatment to members of minority groups were higher in expressive racism than were those who anticipated no interference from affirmative action practices. This one positive effect does contribute to the predictability of expressive racism, but only modestly: including the affirmative action item in the regression equation increases the R^2 from .025 ($F < 1$, not shown in Table 8) to .049 ($p < .01$, shown in column 1, Table 8).

Table 8 about here

This independence of racial threat and symbolic racism can be illustrated in another way. The subjective sense of racial threat is related to proximity to black residential areas: fears that blacks might bring violence to the suburbanites' own neighborhood diminished with distance from Pacoima, sharply so in 1969 (Gamma = -.47, $p < .01$), less so but still significantly in 1973 (Gamma = -.25, $p < .05$). But symbolic racism was completely unrelated to the objective proximity to blacks. In both years, opposition to busing and expressive racism were just as intense among suburbanites whose personal lives were centered far from blacks, as for those who lived adjacent to Pacoima (mean Gamma across the four tests = -.03). So while the personal threat component of suburban racism was responsive to fear-provoking experiences in adult life, symbolic forms of racism clearly were not. Whether suburbanites lived many miles from blacks, or within a stone's throw, had nothing to do with their symbolic racism.

Racial threat could work another way, though. Vulnerability to racial threat might have intensifying effects upon whites' racial attitudes, polarizing them, rather than having simple unidirectional main effects. Threat may provoke more thinking about race, and there is some evidence that thinking about an attitude object leads to more extreme attitudes about it (Tesser, 1978). We tested this polarization hypothesis by "folding" the two symbolic racism indexes at their neutral points to form new dependent variables, and then repeating the regression analyses shown in Tables 7 and 8. As it turned out, extreme attitudes on racial busing or expressive racism were not any more common among the personally vulnerable. Suburbanites who thought that busing was coming soon to Los Angeles,

or who had children enrolled in the Los Angeles school system, did not hold more extreme opinions on the busing issue (R^2 = .000). When the multiplicative terms were included in the regression analysis, extremity became slightly more predictable statistically, though not in any particularly interpretable way (R^2 = .053; $p < .05$). Similarly, of the eleven indicators of vulnerability to racial threat included in our analysis, none related to extreme attitudes on the expressive racism index. Collectively, their predictive failure was perfect (R^2 = .00).

There is yet one other, more exotic version of the racial threat hypothesis. Perhaps vulnerability to threat polarizes the racially tolerant from the racially prejudiced. This prediction follows roughly from an expectancy-value approach: the value component of racial threat (e.g., opposition to neighborhood desegregation) would be more sharply related to symbolic racism among those who expected it to materialize (e.g., those feeling desegregation was likely) than among those who thought it unlikely. If this version of the polarization threat hypothesis is correct, the regression coefficients (predicting symbolic racism from the valence of the threat in question) should be larger among the highly vulnerable (high threat probability) than among "safe" respondents.

This analysis is presented in Table 9. It is obvious that there are no differential effects of threat upon symbolic racism that depend on the perceived probability of the threat's materializing. The regression coefficients are more often larger under low vulnerability than high, contrary to the threat hypothesis, but it would be hard to make a case for a systematic effect one way or the other. So symbolic racism does not seem to be generated by the

---

Table 9 about here

---

polarizing or intensifying effects of personal racial threats, any more than by their direct impact.

Nonracial personal discontents. The displaced aggression theory suggests that symbolic racism ought to be a consequence of frustrations and discontents in the individual's private life, even when they have no direct bearing on race. As indicated earlier, we found only modest amounts of discontent among these suburbanites in the areas of community, economics, schools, and safety. It turns out that such discontent as there was did not relate at all to symbolic forms of racism. To test this, the indicators of dissatisfaction shown in Table 1 were run by both indexes of symbolic racism, for both 1969 and 1973.

In the area of satisfaction with community, these relationships tended to run in the direction predicted by displaced aggression theory: on balance, dissatisfaction was associated with higher levels of symbolic racism. But these tendencies were slight, to say the least. Just one of the thirty-two correlations surpassed statistical significance; the median Gamma across these tests was .06, hardly an inspiring figure. Nor did symbolic racism stem from personal economic discontents. Of the twelve relationships examined, just one achieved statistical significance. In 1969 (but not in 1973), those unhappy with their own economic gains were higher on the expressive racism index (Gamma = .26, $p < .05$). This form of symbolic racism has to do mainly with economic mobility; it focuses upon the feeling that blacks have advanced unfairly. So perhaps it should come as no surprise that those who felt unhappy with their own status were the most resentful of blacks' gains. What is surprising is how tenuously the two were linked. And, in fact, with statistical controls on social background (age, education, and sex), even this modest relationship vanished.

Thus, there was no evidence here that symbolic racism was fed by personal economic dissatisfactions. The evidence was similarly weak when it came to appraisals of local schooling. Dissatisfaction with neighborhood schools was actually associated with less symbolic racism (mean gamma .13), about equally with both indexes, though none of the relationships reaches significance.

This leads, finally, to the domain of private life that would seem to provide the greatest potential for displacement, that of safety. Nevertheless, personal anxieties over crime and violence were also generally unrelated to symbolic racism. The correlations did not approach significance, with one exception, that on the question of whether or not it was safe "for a woman to go out alone after dark" in the neighborhood. Valley residents who believed their neighborhoods dangerous by this criterion were, in 1969 (but not in 1973), also likely to be found among the opponents of busing (Gamma = .35, $p < .01$); and in 1973 (but not in 1969), to be prejudiced on the expressive racism index (Gamma = .39, $p < .01$). The general pattern, though, is for nonracial personal discontents to be unproductive of symbolic racism.

The one exception is interesting--for it appears to represent a clear case of displacement: people who live in neighborhoods threatened by crime therefore become more racist. But there is a puzzling anomaly about the finding. The respondent's own fear of walking in the neighborhood was unrelated to symbolic racism (Gammas = .16 and .04). Moreover, fears for a woman's safety in the neighborhood did not relate to symbolic racism among female respondents, for whom it was more personally relevant (gamma ranged from .03 to .27, with none significant; mean gamma = .13). But among male respondents, such fear did relate to symbolic racism very strongly (gamma ranged from .16 to .49, with a mean of .35). Asking respondents whether or not they are afraid may direct them to

review mainly their own experiences. But to inquire about the danger for a woman to be out alone at night seems manifestly less constraining, more ambiguous and evocative--particularly when the question is posed to men. Thus, symbolic racism was intertwined with the crime and violence issue precisely as that issue became framed in a less personal and more stereotyped way.

Personal discontents as disguised racial threats. One final possibility is that these allegedly nonracial discontents may serve as more socially desirable vehicles for the expression of personal racial threat, when blacks' actions and demands begin to impinge upon the suburbanite's own "good life." That is, the white person may express his feeling of racial threat in an indirect, disguised way, rather than pointing the finger at blacks themselves. So "a pleasant neighborhood" may really mean "my neighborhood is all-white;" "doing well economically" may really mean "doing significantly better than blacks;" "quality education" may really mean "our neighborhood schools are all-white;" and "safe streets" may mean nothing more than "streets with no blacks."

By this reasoning, we should expect personal discontents to produce symbolic racism only when they are linked with personal vulnerability to blacks in that area of life. To test this possibility, each dimension of personal discontent was regressed against symbolic racism among persons highly vulnerable to blacks in that domain, and then among persons not vulnerable to blacks. For symbolic racism to be a cloaked response to racial threats to "the good life," it should be more closely related to discontent among the highly vulnerable. These results are shown in Table 10; they generally dis-

confirm the hypothesis. Personal discontents do not seem to represent racial resentments in disguise. There is but one exception to this pattern. Satisfaction with one's own neighborhood schools seems to promote more opposition to busing among people with children who expect busing, than among parents who do not expect busing. This is shown at the bottom of Table 10. But this finding should be placed in context: it is the only reliable evidence we have turned up here of any impact of either racial threat or nonracial discontents upon symbolic racism. Otherwise, symbolic racism simply seems not to have anything to do with the individual's private life and private interests.

Table 10 about here

Preadult socialization. The final possibility is that the antecedents of symbolic racism lie in preadult socialization. According to this notion, socialization in certain social backgrounds (an earlier generation, the South, lower status, lower levels of education) produces greater anti-black feeling and more enthusiasm for traditional American values, and these socialization residues in turn produce symbolic racism. Presumably, then, demographic variables indexing that early social background should be related to symbolic racism; with the two socialization residues taken into account, however, such relationships should vanish.

The weaknesses of our analysis of preadult socialization, alluded to earlier, are considerable. First, demographic measures are quite indirect as indicators of preadult socialization. Their imprecision means that we will necessarily and substantially understate the empirical case that could

otherwise be made for the view that symbolic racism is rooted in early experiences. This was a particularly severe constraint in the 1969 survey, where we had to rely solely on age and education.

And second, we obviously have no direct measures of the attitudes implanted during preadult socialization. All we have are measures of current attitudes on the dimensions that probably served as the focus of this earlier socialization. There is presumptive evidence that such racial and moral values have probably not changed a great deal within the individual's lifespan (Sears, 1975), but we have no way of knowing with certainty. Our best strategy is to use items phrased in the terms of the 1930's and 1940's on generalized racial egalitarianism, and on traditional American values. Here we assume that we are considerably overestimating the contribution of these socialization residues, since any adulthood attitude change probably works in the direction of greater consistency with symbolic racism (though the small variance in these racial attitudes probably works in the opposite direction). With these caveats, then, we proceed.

We expected that symbolic racism would be more common among those socialized in an earlier generation (i.e., older respondents), in lower status backgrounds (i.e., lower educational levels, and/or with poorly educated parents), and in the South. To test these hypotheses, we ran four regressions, with two measures of symbolic racism (expressive racism and busing), across the two election years (1969 and 1973). Age was in all cases positively related to symbolic racism, but significantly so in only one case (busing in 1969). Lower levels of education were strongly related ($p < .01$) to symbolic racism in all four cases. Parental status (which gave equal weight to education and occupational status) was available only in 1973, with less status

also associated with more symbolic racism ($p < .01$ in both cases), though this effect became non-significant with respondent education taken into account. Similarly, respondents of Southern or rural origins were higher in symbolic racism than respondents from more cosmopolitan backgrounds, but here the effect was significant only on the expressive racism index. Table 11 shows the cumulative R^2 for these demographic factors considered as a package; the multiple correlations range from .25 to .38.

Table 11 about here

These social background measures generally showed the anticipated effects, then, both in their direction and in their modest overall impact. The only surprise, really, was the faint impact of age. However, previous research has suggested that age and education might interact. Campbell (1971) interprets such data as reflecting a sharply liberalizing post-World-War II change in institutions of higher learning, which earlier had catered heavily to conservative interests, and had reflected the dominant segregationist mood of the country. Hence only those attending college since World War II ought to be more racially liberal. Our data show this interaction as well. When added to the regression equation for 1969, the multiplicative term that carries the interaction between age and education produced a nearly statistically significant increase in the predictability of expressive racism ($p < .10$), but not of racial busing ($F < 1$). Evidence from the 1973 survey provides stronger support to the interaction hypothesis. For the relatively young in the 1973 sample (age 21 to 45), education was powerfully related to both forms of

symbolic racism (for expressive racism, b = .635, $F_{1,151}$ = 12.61, p <.01; for racial busing b = .716, $F_{1,151}$ = 16.36, p <.01). But among the older suburbanites (older than 45), education was only weakly related to symbolic racism, (for expressive racism b = .152, $F_{1,83}$ = 1.26; for racial busing, b = .201, $F_{1,83}$ = 1.79). These interactions are consistent with a socialization perspective, if Campbell's interpretation is accepted, since they uncover evidence of a generational effect.

The socialization viewpoint argues additionally that current social location is not as important as is early social background. As just indicated, parental social status and the respondent's educational level (both measuring largely preadult experiences) had substantial effects. But in 1969 indicators of status other than education--subjective social class and family income in particular--were related much less strongly to symbolic racism. And once the effects of education were taken into account, even these modest relationships vanished. Similarly, in 1973, current SES (an averaged index based upon a respondent's total family income, subjective social class, and occupational status) had almost no effect with education considered. As shown in Table 11, current social location added only about 1% to the R^2 in both years. Thus, measures of current social location contributed not at all to symbolic racism. Instead, the measure of status most sharply associated with adult levels of prejudice was education, the indicator that best reflects predult socializing experiences.

A final prediction of the preadult socialization approach is that socialization residues--in our analysis, generalized racial egalitarianism and traditional American values--should considerably improve the predictability of

symbolic racism, and in fact should displace the effects of social background. Table 11 shows that they do add substantially to the R^2, above and beyond that accounted for by social background and current social location. In all regressions, both egalitarianism and traditional values have highly significant effects ($p < .01$ in all cases), with the former somewhat more important for busing, and the latter, for expressive racism. However, education retains its significant effect in all but one case (expressive racism in 1973), indicating that these attitudinal residues do not fully account for the effects of education. With the addition of these elements, the overall multiple correlations in predicting to symbolic racism rise to respectable levels, ranging from .35 to .53, as shown in Table 11.

In both surveys, then, the evidence points most clearly to the importance of education in the socialization of symbolic racism. Our evidence is unfortunately uninformative on the nature of the processes that underly the relationship between symbolic racism and education. This is an interesting question on psychological grounds, and it has enormous practical significance. For our purposes, however, it is less important. Our interest is to distinguish between contemporary, immediate influences--private frustrations and disappointments, personal racial threats, current social location--and formative experiences in the suburbanite's past. And on this point the data are clear: symbolic racism derives mainly from early, rather than contemporary, experience.

Discussion

The goals we set in this study were to discover the key political forms of contemporary white racism, to investigate their antecedents, and to do both in a way that would test pointedly among several general theoretical

approaches to understanding prejudice: symbolic racism/socialization, racial threat/realistic group conflict, and nonracial personal discontent/displacement.

Our first assertion is that "symbolic racism" has replaced issues of formal racial equality as the major driving force behind the political impact of racism. We defined symbolic racism to be a blend of anti-black affect and traditional American moral values, which is expressed in generalizations about such abstract symbols as "welfare," "busing," "reverse discrimination," and so on. Although there was little opposition to formal racial equality in our samples (as in recent national surveys), substantial numbers of whites did express anti-black sentiments on symbolic issues. More important, symbolic racism proved to be the major determinant of anti-black voting in both elections we examined. The overriding importance of symbolic racism held not only among people removed from possible personal threats from blacks, but also among those in more imminent jeopardy. Hence symbolic racism would appear by our evidence to be the politically pivotal component of prejudice among American whites.

Our second major point is that direct racial threats to whites' private lives were largely irrelevant to white racism, either in accounting for anti-black voting behavior, or in producing symbolically racist attitudes. We took considerable pains to measure well the possible tangible, direct, proximal threats blacks might pose to whites in several areas of their private lives: neighborhood desegregation and social contact, economic competition, school desegregation, and crime and violence. We included both subjective measures of threat (e.g., the judgment that racial busing was about to be implemented in neighborhood schools) and objective measures(e.g., having children in the Los

Angeles school system). Nevertheless, we could find no evidence that direct racial threats affected voting behavior, or generated more racist attitudes. Nor were there the hypothesized expectancy-value interactions: the various threats did not produce any more anti-black voting, or more symbolic racism, among people who thought the threats likely to materialize. Nor, finally, did threat intensify racial attitudes or polarize them along predispositional lines. In our analysis, direct racial threats to whites' private lives proved irrelevant to their political and racial attitudes.

Our third point is that neither anti-black voting nor symbolic racism arise from nonracial discontents in whites' private lives. Loneliness and social isolation, economic frustrations (absolute or relative), dissatisfaction with schools, and anxiety about personal safety--none appeared to spur displaced agression against blacks either in voting behavior or in racial prejudices. The only exception here seemed on closer examination to be an instance of symbolic racism: fear for a woman's safety in the neighborhood at night was correlated with anti-black attitudes, but it had nothing to do with fear for oneself; rather, it was limited to the fears men had for women's safety. In short, the threats and discontents that motivate anti-black political behavior and anti-black racial attitudes are symbolic; they have little to do with the realities, pleasant or unpleasant, of whites' private lives.

Finally, the origins of symbolic racism seemed to lie more in preadult socialization than in current experience. It was correlated with rearing in the South, in an earlier generation, or in lower-status parental homes, though these effects were largely captured statistically by the respondent's own educational level. Current social status did not affect symbolic racism, just as current racial threats and personal discontents had not. Hence it would

appear that the most politically potent versions of white racism today have little to do with the current realities of whites' lives, but are expressions of racial attitudes and moral values learned years ago.

Generality of results.

These conclusions are based on simple tests as well as on intricate, more refined analyses. In every case, the analyses themselves drew upon multiple measures of key variables. The findings were remarkably parallel, both across alternative measures, and across the two election years. Rarely do successive tests offer an opportunity for such precise replication, particularly those conducted four years apart in a period of sharp political change. The consistency of our results considerably strengthens our claims, then. This nevertheless leaves the difficult problem of external validity: how cautious need we be in generalizing these findings to other settings and populations?

First, we believe that the pattern of our findings is roughly representative of what would be found in American suburbs more generally. By their retrospective judgments, our respondents had behaved politically quite like the state of California as a whole in recent elections; their racial attitudes were similar to those held by Northern whites more generally at the time (Sears & Kinder, 1971). Demographically they resembled suburbanites throughout the country.

Generalizing our findings beyond suburban America is a more risky venture. On the face of it, there are two reasons for thinking our analysis should best be confined to prejudice in the suburbs. The first supposes that, in exploring racism in suburbia rather than in an area where racial conflict is more intense, we have systematically underestimated the effects of racial threat. Perhaps symbolic racism, with its overtones of disinterested morality, is the luxury of those not personally threatened.

We think this is not a severe limitation on the findings. Large numbers of our suburban respondents did perceive themselves as being directly threatened by blacks. Its just that such threat had no discernible impact on either voting or racial attitudes. Symbolic racism had a strong political effect, and this was so at every level of racial threat (Tables 5 and 6). So we have fairly strong evidence from our own research for arguing against the notion that symbolic racism flourishes only in the absence of threat.

Other research supports this same point, all of it centering on the bases of support and opposition to racial busing. For example, in an analysis of national survey data, the strongest predictors of resistance to busing proved to be racial prejudice and political conservatism. By contrast, measures of the personal impact of busing, such as having public school children, living in neighborhoods with all-white schools, and living in an area where busing had already been implemented or promised to be implemented soon, did not affect busing attitudes (Sears, Hensler, & Speer, Note 2; Sears, Lau, Tyler, & Allen, Note 3 Erbe, 1977; Kelley, 1974; Weidman, 1975). Similarly, prejudiced white parents in Florida were more opposed to local desegregation programs than were more tolerant parents, while opposition had little to do with such concrete personal impacts of the plan as the length of their child's bus ride or the racial composition of the host school (Gatlin, Giles, & Cataldo, Note 4). In Louisville, prejudice proved the major determinant of anti-busing attitudes during the first year of busing there, with personal impact again having little effect (McConahay and Hawley, Note 6). And finally, again in Los Angeles, just before the announcement of a long-awaited desegregation plan, parents were somewhat more opposed to busing than non-parents or those in adjacent unaffected school districts, but symbolic

attitudes (prejudice and conservatism) were considerably more influential (Allen & Sears, Note 6). These results both corroborate our analysis and extend, if suggestively, its generality.

But another objection, again reasonable at first blush, argues for more prudent, cautious generalization. The argument here is that race may invite symbolic thinking among suburbanites because they have virtually no friendly personal contact with blacks. In the suburban world, there are simply no personal experiences with blacks that might offset outdated racial and moral socialization.

There is no question that suburbanites in our sample had little direct experience with blacks. In 1969, more than one-third of our sample (36%) reported that they "are around" blacks less than once a week. Just 37% in 1969 claimed to know any black professionals, even when "professional" was explicitly defined to include nurses, school teachers, and librarians, as well as doctors and lawyers. (There were essentially no changes in responses to these two questions when asked of the 1973 sample; the figures were, respectively, 34% and 41%). In short, the degree of racial isolation and lack of direct interracial contact for white suburbanites is striking (perhaps even more striking when posed against the high levels of personal racial threat shown by the same suburbanites).

But racial isolation is a defining characteristic of social life of whites generally. Friendly social encounters between the races are rare even in integrated neighborhoods. According to Bradburn, Sudman, and Gockel's (1971) study, just 1% of whites living in substantially integrated neighborhoods reported going out for dinner or to a movie with blacks in the preceding

several months; less than a third (32%) said that anyone in their family had even stopped to talk with black neighbors when they met on the street.

One of the fond hopes of the integration movement, of course, is to increase such encounters. It would be valuable to know if greater personal contact does in fact diminish symbolic thinking. This is an important empirical question, but its answer does not much affect the generalizability of our findings to contemporary American society. Racial isolation is the current dominant American pattern; under such circumstances, the politically powerful form of prejudice is symbolic racism.

Based on various types of direct and "side" evidence, then, we believe our findings to be quite general. But even if subsequent research proves us wrong in this regard, and our analysis is shown to be limited to the dynamics and political consequences of prejudice in the American suburb, [illegible] implications of our study would remain largely undisturbed. The American white population continues to move into metropolitan suburbs, out of central cities, and away from farms and small towns. The political responses of white suburbanites therefore become increasingly decisive to racial progress. Replication of our analysis in less suburban surroundings is certainly desirable, but in any event, the findings should generalize to a huge and centrally important segment of the American public.

Implications for theories of prejudice.

The main purpose of this study was to elevate the disappointingly low theoretical level of research on prejudice. Allport's (1954) inventory of the many possible theories of racism has perhaps stalled social psychologists' enthusiasm for theoretically pointed research in this area. But not all possible theories are correct or relevant. Social psychologists can contribute

to this literature by developing theories until they make competing predictions, and then subjecting them to demanding tests. When this is done, we believe, some elements of the conventional wisdom will prove incorrect, or at least unimportant.

One of these is realistic group conflict theory, which is so commonsensical and self-evident that it seems hardly worth investigating. Yet our data show that racial threat had very little impact on racial attitudes or racially-based voting behavior. And, as indicated earlier, its previous empirical support was unimpressive. We hope this research inspires further detailed analyses of the realistic group conflict theory of racial prejudice.

Displacement theories have also not been tested very directly in the past. Experimental tests have not attempted to measure impact upon long-standing racial attitudes or political behavior, and correlational studies have been badly flawed by their inadequate consideration of alternative and plausible interpretations (see especially Christie & Jahoda, 1954). Against this background, our consistently negative results--even when interactions are taken into account--weigh heavily against displacement theories of prejudice.

Our findings generally support the symbolic racism/socialization perspective. They suggest that symbolic racism is compartmentalized from the personal impact of racial conflicts, and from private life more generally. And it is the symbolic level, not the personal, that is the politically significant.

"Symbolic politics."

Our findings imply that the white public's political response to racial

issues is not based in any tangible challenge to the racial status quo, but in moral or symbolic challenges. The political problems with busing do not arise merely from whites whose children are threatened with busing; resistance to affirmative action does not come from those whose own careers are in jeopardy. Rather, the problem with busing is that it conjures up images throughout the white population of innocent little white children being sent far from their safe homes into schools filled with stupid, disorderly, dangerous minorities. The problem with affirmative action is that it conjures up images of hardworking, deserving whites being displaced by lazy, unintelligent, wholly undeserving blacks. The politically important component of prejudice--symbolic racism--is compartmentalized away from the personal impact of racial conflicts.

Such "psychic segregation" holds not only for symbolic racism; it shows up as well in suburbanites' more general discrimination between the quality of personal life, on the one hand, and the quality of national life, on the other. As previously noted, most of our respondents appeared to be quite satisfied with their personal lives--with their communities, neighborhood schools, economic progress, and safety (Table 1). Yet in each area they were much more pessimistic about the broader society. For example, most in our samples were optimistic about their own economic futures, and quite satisfied with their own recent gains. Yet more than half (54% in 1973) agree that "the condition of the average man is getting worse, not better." And while nearly everyone felt quite safe in their own neighborhoods, and well-protected by the local police, 63% thought (in 1973) "streets aren't safe these days without a policeman around."

These comparisons admittedly are crude--the items are not strictly comparable--but the pattern is impressively consistent. And it corresponds to findings

in more systematic research on perceived quality of life: satisfaction in domains of life proximal to the individual, such as family, job, neighborhood, home, etc. is consistently greater than is satisfaction with more remote domains, such as the polity, the general economy, etc. (cf. Withey & Andrews, 1976).

Moreover, societal discontent was essentially autonomous from personal discontent, even in the same domain. Since this is a side point, and the items are not exactly comparable, there is no need to go into detail here. Perhaps the safety example will make the argument. Anxieties over personal safety had virtually no implications for suburbanites perceptions of the broader society. Thus, the belief that crime was on the rise in the neighborhood did not relate significantly to such societal-level questions as support for the death penalty, for restricting bail, or a perceived need for people to keep guns in their houses, and it was only modestly related to the general perception that streets in America are no longer safe (gamma = .27, $p < .01$). The same pattern generally characterized the other indicators of personal safety. Fears and insecurities provoked by crime as it touched suburbanites' personal lives did not seem to affect their attitudes toward societal criminal and legal issues.

In short, unhappiness with American society appears to be autonomous from personal discontents. Frustrations and discontents in personal life are more often "morselized" than politicized (Lane, 1962): connections between personal life and political life are rarely made. Discontent in private life is insulated from political and social malaise - and as we saw earlier, from symbolic racism as well.

Support for a symbolic analysis of politics, and for the compartmentalization of political concerns from private ones, is provided also by a number of recent investigations. We have already referred to the research on racial busing, which shows very consistently that opposition to busing is derived largely from longstanding political and racial values; the personal impact of busing is far less important. Similarly, the effects of personal concerns and discontents were overridden by those due to political predispositions in a variety of contexts: in civilians' attitudes toward the Vietnam war (Lau, Brown, & Sears, 1978), the energy crisis (Sears, Tyler, Citrin, & Kinder, 1978), and in the political consequences of economic discontents (Kiewiet & Kinder, Note 7; Kinder and Kiewiet, Note 8). In each case, symbolic discontent was surprisingly autonomous from grievances anchored in direct, personal experience. Each time it was the symbolic form of discontent, not the personal, that was the more significant politically. These results all support a symbolic analysis of politics.[7]

Why are the concrete realities of people's own lives so segregated from their judgments about the society as a whole? A pair of possibilities suggest themselves. The first is that personal concerns and symbolic judgments have entirely different sources. Personal concerns and disappointments presumably reflect both the realities of contemporary life, good and bad, along with evaluative standards (or "comparison levels;" Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) that people bring to their experiences. Symbolic judgments, on the other hand, have their antecedents in preadult socialization. Evidence on this latter point is much more indirect and inferential than we would like, however, as is indicated by our own analysis of the socialization antecedents of symbolic

racism. Moreover, the process by which early socialization (e.g., to intellectual inferiority of "coloreds") is generalized to later symbolic racism (e.g., to "busing") requires much more investigation. Our assumption is that the symbols must remain sufficiently constant for some simple affective generalization process to explain continuity in personal attitudes as the issues change. But this is only speculation at this stage. In any case, the general point here is that symbolic judgments may be so compartmentalized away from personal concerns and experiences because they have such radically different origins.

The second and as yet unexplored possible explanation for this cognitive segregation is that concrete personal experiences, or the personal impacts of political issues, may arrive in highly complex, multidimensional form. They may be too complex to process easily into simple-minded generalizations about society. Anxiety about not being promoted because of affirmative action procedures, for example, generates many feelings: self-doubt, anger at immediate superiors, guilt about one's family, shame and embarrassment, as well as those that focus on the racial repercussions of the experience. It would be understandable if judgments about the society--and symbolic racism in particular--were derived from simpler inputs, more pre-coded for the level of generality and abstraction they entail; i.e., imputs at the symbolic level. We hope that subsequent research on racism, and on the interplay between private life and political life more generally, will begin to examine such possibilities.

Reference Notes

1. Sears, D.O., & Kinder, D.R. The good life, "white racism," and the Los Angeles voter. Paper presented at the 50th annual meeting of the Western Psychological Association, Los Angeles, 1970.

2. Sears, D.O., Hensler, C.P., & Speer, L.K. Whites' opposition to "busing": Self-interest or symbolic racism? Paper presented at the 85th annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco, August, 1977.

3. Sears, D.O., Lau, R.R., Tyler, T., & Allen, A.M., Jr. Self-interest versus symbolic politics in policy attitudes and Presidential voting. Unpublished manuscript, UCLA, 1978.

4. Gatlin, D.S., Giles, M.W., & Cataldo, E.F. Policy support within a target group: the case of school desegregation. Unpublished manuscript, Florida Atlantic University, 1978.

5. McConahay, J.B., & Hawley, W.D. Is it the buses or the blacks? Paper delivered at the 85th annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco, August, 1977.

6. Allen, H.M. Jr., & Sears, D.O. White opposition to busing in Los Angeles: Is self-interest rejuvenated? Unpublished paper, UCLA, 1978.

7. Kiewiet, D.R., & Kinder, D.R. Political consequences of economic discontents--private and collective. Paper delivered at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York, September, 1978.

8. Kinder, D.R., & Kiewiet, D.R. Economic grievances and political behavior. Paper delivered at the 85th annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco, August, 1977.

9. Sears, D.O. The Jarvis Amendment: Self-interest or symbolic politics. Unpublished manuscript, UCLA, 1978

Adorno, T.W., Frenkel-Brunswick, E., Levinson, D.J., & Sanford, R.N. The authoritarian personality. New York: Harper, 1950.

Allport, G.W. The nature of prejudice. New York: Doubleday, 1954.

Ashmore, R.D. Prejudice: causes and cures. In B.E. Collins, Social psychology. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1970.

Ashmore, R.D., & DelBoca, F.K. Psychological approaches to understanding intergroup conflict. In P.A. Katz (ed.), Towards the elimination of racism. New York: Pergamon Press, 1976.

Blalock, H.M., Jr. Toward a theory of minority-group relations. New York: John Wiley, 1967.

Bradburn, N.M., Sudman, S., & Gockel, G.L. Side by side: integrated neighborhoods in America. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971

Campbell, A. White attitudes toward Black people. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, 1971.

Campbell, A., Converse, P.E., & Rodgers, W.L. The quality of American life. New York: Russell Sage, 1976.

Christie, R., & Jahoda, M. (eds.). Studies in the scope and method of "The Authoritarian Personality." New York: The Free Press, 1954.

Cohen, J., & Cohen, P. Applied multiple regression/correlation analysis for the behavioral sciences. Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1975.

Ehrlich, H.J. The social psychology of prejudice. New York: John Wiley, 1973.

Erbe, B.M. On "Politics of school busing." Public Opinion Quarterly, 1977 38, 113-117.

Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. Belief, attitude, intention, and behavior. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1975.

Andrews, F.M., & Withey, S.B. Social indicators of well-being. New York Plenum Press, 1976.

Greeley, A.M., & Sheatsley, P.B. Attitudes toward racial integration. Scientific American, 1971, 223, 13-19.

Hovland, C.I., & Sears, R.R. Minor studies of aggression. VI. Correlation of lynchings with economic indices. Journal of Psychology, 1940, 9, 301-310.

Inglehart, R. The silent revolution. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.

Katz, D. The functional approach to the study of attitudes. Public Opinion Quarterly, 1960, 24, 163-204.

Katz, P.A. Racism and social science: towards a new commitment. In P.A. Katz (ed.), Towards the elimination of racism. New York: Pergamon Press, 1976.

Kelley, J. The politics of school busing. Public Opinion Quarterly, 1974, 38, 23-39.

Key, V.O., Jr. Southern politics. New York: Random House, 1949.

Lau, R.R., Brown, J.A., & Sears, D.O. Some attitudinal effects of personal involvement with the war in Vietnam. Public Opinion Quarterly, in press.

Lane, R.E. Political ideology. New York: The Free Press, 1962.

LeVine, R.A., & Campbell, D.T. Ethnocentrism. New York: John Wiley, 1972.

Lipset, S.M., & Schneider, W. The Bakke case: How would it be decided at the bar of public opinion? Public Opinion, 1978, 1, 38-44.

Maykovich, M.K. Correlates of racial prejudice. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1975, 32, 1014-1020.

McConahay, J.B., & Hough, Jr., J.C. Symbolic racism. Journal of Social Issues, 1976, 32, 23-45.

Middleton, R. Regional differences in prejudice. American Sociological Review, 1976, 41, 94-117.

Pettigrew, T.F. When a black candidate runs for mayor: race and voting behavior. In H. Hahn (ed.), People and politics in urban society. Beverly Hills, Russell Sage, 1972.

Pettigrew, T.F., & Cramer, M.R. The demography of desegregation. Journal of Social Issues, 1959, 15, 61-71.

Sears, D.O. Political socialization. In F.I. Greenstein and N.W. Polsby (eds.), Handbook of political science (Vol. 2). Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1975.

Sears, D.O., & Kinder, D.R. Racial tensions and voting in Los Angeles. In W.Z. Hirsch (ed.), Los Angeles: viability and prospects for metropolitan leadership. New York: Praeger, 1971.

Sears, D.O. and McConahay, J.B. The Politics of Violence: The New Urban Blacks and the Watts Riot. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1973.

Sears, D.O., Tyler, T.R., Citrin, J., & Kinder, D.R. Political system support and public response to the energy crisis. American Journal of Political Science, 1978, 22, 56-82.

Sherif, M. Harrey, O.J., White, B.J., Hood, W.R., & Sherif, C.W. Intergroup conflict and cooperation: the robber's cave experiment. Norman, Oklahoma: University Book Exchange, 1961

Sudman, S. Applied sampling. Chicago: Aldine, 1976.

Tesser, A. Self-generated attitude change. In L. Berkowitz (ed.), Advances in experimental social psychology, Vol. 11, New York: Academic Press, 1978.

Thibaut, J.W., & Kelley, H.H. The social psychology of groups. New York: John Wiley, 1959.

Weidman, J.C., Resistance of white adults to the busing of school children. Journal of Research and Development in Education, 1975, 9, 123-129.

Wonnacott, R.J., & Wonnacott, T.H. Econometrics. New York: John Wiley, 1970.

Footnotes

The data we report here were collected as part of a larger project on black mayoralty candidates under the direction of Professor Thomas Pettigrew, to whom we owe deep thanks. John Morgan, Andrew Walker, Al Lauck, and Richard E. Whitney contributed much valuable assistance with data analysis and manuscript preparation. Comments on an earlier draft by James Q. Wilson, Raymond Wolfinger, John B. McConahay, Faye Crosby and M. Brewster Smith have been particularly helpful. Support was provided by a Rockefeller Foundation grant to Professor Pettigrew, and by NSF and USPHS grants to Sears.

1.This mix of racism and conservatism has also recently been pinpointed by others as fueling a new form of racism, but in slightly different terms. McConahay and Hough (1976) trace the conservatism element directly to the heritage of Protestantism, and the Protestant ethic; Lipset and Schneider (1978) see it as emerging from the tension between egalitarian and individualistic values in American culture.

2. We should note one potential difficulty with this procedure of representing symbolic racism in terms of multiple-item scales, while representing racial threat principally in terms of individual items. Just the greater variability of the former might give it more statistical power. To guard against this, the symbolic racism variables were analyzed two ways: as more or less continuous scales, and as trichotomized variables. The results were identical.

3. This is one instance in which the finding varied somewhat depending on which index of candidate preference was used. The busing index had a significant ($p < .05$) effect upon vote intention, though only a marginal ($p < .10$) effect upon the candidate preference index used throughout the paper.

4. These results were completely unaffected by the addition of social background variables to the regression analysis. With statistical controls on age, education, and sex, precisely the same pattern held: symbolic racism, and not racial threats to private life, carried the political consequences of prejudice.

5. As a further test of the importance of symbolic racism, we compared its effect on voting with that due to other dispositions. Of the several we considered, the most familiar is political partisanship. In both contests, party identification was significantly associated with candidate preference: Republicans preferred Yorty, Democrats supported Bradley (in 1969, Pearson r= .15; in 1973, 12; $p < .10$ for both). A second political disposition was provided by a question that asked respondents whether they thought of themselves as liberals or as conservatives. Conservatives were much more likely to prefer Yorty than were liberals on both occasions (in 1969, Pearson r= .25; in 1973, .34; $p < .01$ for both).

When these two political predispositions--partisanship and liberalism--conservatism--were added to the 1969 regression analysis just summarized virtually nothing changed. Candidate preference did not become more predictable. Neither partisanship nor liberalism-conservatism contributed independently to the vote, once the effects due to racism were taken into account. And finally, none of the regression coefficients indexing the effects of racial attitudes changed with the entrance of political dispositions into the regression analysis.

The dominance of symbolic racism was also maintained in the 1973 election when political predispositions were considered. This time, however, the incorporation of partisanship and liberalism-conservatism into the regression model resulted in a modest but clearly significant increment in the predictability of candidate preference, due entirely to the measure of ideology. Conservatives favored Yorty over Bradley, even with symbolic racism, racial threat and party identification held constant. At the same time, symbolic racism con-

tinued to contribute substantially to voting; racial threats to personal life had no effect at all. This is the critical point for our analysis, of course. Voting for mayor in suburban Los Angeles in 1973--as in 1969--was determined principally by symbolic racism; very little if at all by racial threat.

6. There is a further point to be made here, one which highlights the central message of this evidence. As Table 1 makes clear, personal economic satisfactions were completely independent of voting. A measure of fraternal economic deprivation, however, was correlated with voting. Suburbanites who believed that their own economic gains were generally keeping pace with white-collar workers, but were trailing behind those of blacks, tended (slightly) to support Yorty (in 1969, $p < .06$; in 1973, $p < .20$, both by X^2). This finding is interesting on two grounds. First, fraternal deprivation is simultaneously less personal and more explicitly racial than the rest of the life satisfaction measures included in the survey. As such, it represents something of a conceptual way station between purely personal discontents and symbolic racism. So it is encouraging for our theoretical analysis that whereas personal based economic frustrations were unrelated to suburbanites' politics, fraternal (or group-anchored) economic discontents did seem to carry political ramifications. Second, the idea of fraternal deprivation has figured prominently in Pettigrew and his colleagues' interpretation of working-class opposition to black mayoralty candidates (Pettigrew, 1972). Our research in part reinforces Pettigrew's work, but also qualifies it. Although fraternal deprivation was significantly related to voting, this was a modest association at best. More importantly, the relationship was completely erased when the effects of symbolic racism were taken into account. In our analysis, fraternal deprivation had no political force of its own.

7. One recent study provides an interesting counter-example. Self-interest did seem to influence Californians' attitudes toward Proposition 13 in 1978,

the property tax referendum (Sears, note 6). Owning a home, not having a government job, expecting not to be personally affected by cuts in government service, each was related to greater support for Proposition 13. Yet even in this case, where self-interest seems so clearly linked to a political choice, the impact of symbolic predictors upon support for Proposition 13 was very great. So while it seems unlikely that attitudes never serve an instrumental function, it is possible that they do so more rarely than usually assumed, or under only very special circumstances.

Table 1

Nonracial Personal Discontents: Degree, and Correlation with Vote

	Percent Discontented		Correlation with Candidate Preference	
Community	1969	1973	1969	1973
Satisfaction with neighborhood (% not very)	11%	12%	-.07	-.00
Friendliness of neighborhood (% not warm and friendly)	16	na	-.03	na
Know neighbors by first name (% few, none)	37	na	+.07	na
Borrow from neighbors (% rarely, never)	46	45	-.01	-.09
Lived in area (% up to three years)	23	10	+.19	+.19
Considered moving (% recently)	48	40	-.13	-.17
Relatives in Southern California (% only a few, none at all)	47	42	-.19	-.16
Quality of housing (% generally, very dissatisfied)	na	8	na	+.24
Neighborhood parks (% generally, very dissatisfied)	31	31	+.13	+.10
Personal economic status				
Satisfaction (% somewhat,very dissatisfied)	33	34	-.16	+.09
Personal financial progress (% declined)	18	14	-.12	+.04
Personal financial optimism (% expect decline)	9	6	-.01	-.20
Local Schools				
Neighborhood schools (% generally, very dissatified)	23	23	+.19	+.08
Local elementary teachers (% fair, poor)	na	44	na	+.03
Personal Safety				
Neighborhood police protection (% generally, very dissatisfied)	14	13	+.06	-.12
Neighborhood crime increasing (% more)	na	45	na	+.01
Afraid at night within a mile (% yes)	na	52	na	-.06
Women safe at night in neighborhood (% unsafe)	30	37	-.30**	-.22
Mean Gamma			-.02	-.02

Note. The entry is the Gamma coefficient indexing the relationship between current discontent and voting. Some items have been reflected so that in each case, a negative Gamma means that the dissatisfied are more likely to vote for Yorty. In the 1969 sample, N ranges from 157 to 178; in 1973, N ranges from 181 to 232.

*$p < .01$ (by X^2)

**$p < .05$ (by X^2)

Table 2

Personal Racial Threats

	Percent Threatened		Correlation with Candidate Preference	
Community and social contact	1969	1973	1969	1973
If a Negro/black family with about the same income and education as you moved next door, would you mind it a lot, a little, or not at all? (% a lot, a little)	36	30	.43*	.48*
[How likely is it that] a few black families will move into this neighborhood? (very, somewhat likely)	na	80	na	.06
How strongly would you object if a member of your family wanted to bring a Negro/ black friend home to dinner? (% very strongly, strongly, slightly)	27	27	.50*	.58*
Economic well-being				
Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your economic gains compared to those of Negroes/blacks? (% dissatisfied)	12%	18%	.03	.31
Have the economic gains of Negroes/blacks been about the same, much greater than, greater than, or less than yours over the past five years? (% greater)	35	29	.30	.30*
In the next few years, it is possible that you or members of your family will have more contact with blacks than you have now. How likely is it that you will have a black supervisor at work? (% very, somewhat likely)	na	48	na	-.18
In the next few years, how likely is it that members of your family or friends will be denied applications for jobs or promotions because of preferential treatment to members of minority groups? (% very, somewhat likely)	na	58	na	.12

Table 2 (Continued)

	Percent Threatened		Correlation with Candidate Preference	
	1969	1973	1969	1973
School desegregation				
How likely is it that black children will be bused into the elementary schools of this neighborhood? (% very or somewhat likely)	na	46	na	.09
How likely is it that children from the elementary schools in this neighborhood will be bused to other parts of the city to achieve school desegregation? (% very or somewhat likely)	na	36	na	.04
Safety				
How likely is it that Negroes/blacks bring violence to this neighborhood? (% very, somewhat likely)	35	27	.27	.46*

* $p < .01$ (by X^2)
** $p < .05$ (by X^2)

Note. The percent not threatened is the remainder of the sample, less about 5% to 10% "don't knows." Item wordings are approximate; exact wordings upon request. Correlations are gamma.

Table 3

Symbolic Racism

	Percent non liberal		Correlation with candidate preference	
Expressive racism	1969	1973	1969	1973
Do you think that most Negroes/blacks who receive money from welfare programs could get along without it if they tried, or do they really need this help? (% could get along)	54%[X]	52%[X]	.69*	.56*
Negroes/Blacks shouldn't push themselves where they're not wanted (% agree)	63[X]	64[X]	.48*	.44*
Because of past discrimination, it is sometimes necessary to set up quotas for admission to college of minority group students (% disagree)	na	47[X]	na	.39*
Do you think LosAngeles city officials pay more, less, or the same attention to a request or complaint from a black person or from a white person? (% more)	26[X]	34[X]	.55*	.30*
Of the groups on the card, are there any which you think have gained more than they are entitled to? (% giving "black")	8	10	.40	.48**
It is wrong to set up quotas to admit black students to college who don't meet the usual standards (% agree)	na	73	na	.30
Over the past few years, blacks have got more than they deserve (% agree)	23[X]	30[X]	.40**	.40*
In Los Angeles, would you say many, some, or only a few blacks miss out on jobs or promotions because of racial discrimination? (% only a few, none)	34	36	.49*	.32**
Busing				
Busing elementary school children to schools in other parts of the city only harms their education (% agree)	54%[X]	62%[X]	.43*	.25
In some cases it is best for children to attend elementary schools outside their neighborhood (% disagree)	68[X]	70[X]	.45*	.26
Are you in favor or opposed to the busing of children to achieve racial desegregation of the public schools (% oppose)	na	86[X]	na	.42**
If the Supreme Court ordered busing to achieve desegregation of the public schools, would you be opposed to it? (% yes)	na	79[X]	na	.40**
If necessary, children should be bused to achieve racial desegregation of the public schools (% disagree)	na	83[X]	na	.22**

* $p < .01$ (by X^2)

** $p < .05$ (by X^2)

Note. The percent liberal is the remainder of the sample, less about 5 to 10% "don't knows." Item wordings are approximate; exact wordings upon request. Correlations are gamma. An "X" indicates that the item is included in an index of symbolic racism used in the subsequent analysis.

Table 4

Candidate Preference:

The Impact of Symbolic Racism and Racial Threat

Standardized Regression Coefficient (Beta) of:	1969 (n = 178) Equation 1	2	3	1973 (n = 220) Equation 1	2	3
Symbolic Racism						
Expressive racism	.365*		.315*	.338*		.291*
Racial bussing	.217*		.239*	.119		.119
Racial Threat						
Fear of black violence		.189**	.182**		.125	.104
Economic resentments		.098	-.000		.176**	.108
Neighborhood desegregation		.077	-.056		.117	.077
Social Contact		.120	.049		.054	-.035
Likelihood of neighborhood desegregation					-.054	-.046
Likelihood of black supervisor					-.091	-.051
Likelihood of family affected by affirmative action					-.063	-.109
Likelihood of bussing blacks in					.067	.019
Likelihood of bussing whites out					-.050	-.004
R^2	.222	.091	.238	.160	.068	.157
Additional variance contributed by:						
Symbolic racism (3-2)			+.147			+.089
Racial threat (3-1)			+.016			-.003

*$p < .01$
**$p < .05$

Note. Variables are coded so that a positive Beta is predicted in each case. R^2 is adjusted for number of variables in the analysis.

Table 5

Impact of Personal Racial Threat on Candidate Preference
Among Respondents High and Low in Vulnerability (entries are b's)

Threat	Dimension of Vulnerability	Vulnerability to Threat: High	Low
Residential desegregation			
	Proximity to Pacoima (1969)[1]	-.05 (62)	.25 (84)
	Proximity to Pacoima (1973)[1]	-.12 (48)	.76 (69)
	Perceived likelihood of neighborhood deseg.[2] (1973)	.05 (85)	1.51 (39)
Fear of black violence			
	Proximity to Pacoima (1969)[1]	.22 (48)	.26 (69)
	Proximity to Pacoima (1973)[2]	.04 (62)	.46 (84)
Interracial social contact			
	Perceived likelihood of neighborhood deseg. (1973)[2]	.10 (85)	.33 (39)
Economic resentment of blacks			
	Perceived likelihood of being affected by affirm. action (1973)[2]	-.05 (73)	.21 (81)
	Perceived likelihood of having black supervisor (1973)[3]	.01 (103)	.18 (113)
Busing			
	Perceived likelihood of blacks bused in (1973)[3]		
	With children in LA	.09 (53)	.05 (47)
	No children in LA	.06 (62)	.02 (52)
	Perceived likelihood of whites bused out (1973)[3]		
	With children in LA	.08 (43)	.06 (60)
	No children in LA	.03 (55)	.02 (61)

1. Adjacent vs distant
2. Very likely vs unlikely ("likely" omitted)
3. Likely vs unlikely

Note. Entry in each case is b, the unstandardized regression coefficient, the appropriate measure for subgroup comparisons (Blalock, 1967). The figure in parentheses is the number of respondents in each category of vulnerability.

Table 6

Impact of Expressive Racism on Candidate Preference Among Respondents High and Low in Vulnerability to Racial Threat

Dimension of Vulnerability	Perceived Vulnerability	
	High	Low
Community		
Perceived likelihood of neighborhood deseg (1973)	.08 (85)	.08 (39)
Personal Economic Status		
Perceived likelihood of being affected by affirmative action programs (1973)	.13 (73)	.09 (81)
Perceived likelihood of having a black superior (1973)	.11 (103)	.11 (113)
Schools		
Perceived likelihood of blacks bused in (1973)	.14 (115)	.08 (99)
Perceived likelihood of whites bused away (1973)	.13 (98)	.09 (121)
Safety		
Proximity to Pacoima (1969)	.17 (48)	.11 (69)
Proximity to Pacoima (1973)	.14 (62)	.09 (84)

Note: Entry is b, unstandardized regression coefficient, for the effect of expressive racism on candidate preference within the high or low vulnerability group specified. Otherwise, see Table 5 for explanation.

Table 7

Personal Vulnerability to Racial Threat
as a Determinant of Symbolic Racism: Opposition to Racial Busing
(1973 only)

Standardized Regression Coefficient (Beta) of:	1	2
Likelihood of busing black children in (A)	.106	.083
Likelihood of busing white children out (B)	-.043	.110
Children in LA elementary schools (X)	.063	-.074
Children in LA high schools (Y)	.006	-.050
(AxX)		-.042
(BxX)		-.046
(AxY)		.080
(BxY)		-.283*
R^2	.000	.030

* $p \leq .01$
** $p < .05$

Note. A positive Beta means that greater vulnerability goes with greater symbolic racism. N is 238 in all analyses. R^2 is adjusted for number of independent variables included in the equation.

Table 8

Personal Vulnerability to Racial Threat as a Determinant of Expressive Racism

	1	2
Likelihead of bussing black children in (A)	.176**	.271**
Likelihood of bussing white children out (B)	-.123	-.169
Likelihood of neighborhood desegregation	.045	.036
Likelihood of black supervisor	-.118	-.121
Likelihood of family being affected by affirmative action	.201*	.209*
Children in LA elementary schools (X)	-.008	.039
Children in LA high schools (Y)	-.070	-.086
(AxX)		-.198
(BxX)		.173
(AxY)		.035
(BxY)		-.103
R^2	.046	.049

Note: For explanations see note to Table 7.

Table 9

Impact of Personal Racial Threat on Symbolic Racism

Among Respondents High and Low in Vulnerability

(entries are b's)

Threat Dimension of Vulnerability	Expressive Racism Vulnerability to Threat High	 Low
Residential Desegregation		
Proximity to Pacoima (1969)[1]	1.63 (53)	2.73 (71)
Proximity to Pacoima (1973)[1]	2.05 (70)	1.78 (87)
Perceived likelihood of neighborhood desegregation (1973)[2]	2.61 (93)	-.33 (43)
Fear of black violence		
Proximity to Pacoima (1969)[1]	.81 (53)	1.27 (71)
Proximity to Pacoima (1973)[1]	2.76 (70)	-.64 (88)
Interracial social contact		
Perceived likelihood of neighborhood desegregation (1973)[2]	1.88 (96)	2.83 (43)
Economic resentments of blacks		
Perceived likelihood of being affected by affirmative action (1973)[2]	.57 (79)	1.01 (87)
Perceived likelihood of having black supervisor (1973)[3]	1.05 (113)	.99 (120)
Busing		
Perceived likelihood of blacks bused in (1973)[3]		
With children in LA	.44 (44)	.60 (32)
No children in LA	.27 (64)	.36 (53)
Perceived likelihood of whites bused out (1973)[3]		
With children in LA	.40 (29)	.52 (51)
No children in LA	.33 (57)	.36 (64)

(continued)

Table 9 (continued)

Racial Busing

Threat Dimension of Vulnerability	Vulnerability to Threat: High	Low
Residential desegregation		
Proximity to Pacoima (1969)[1]	.49 (53)	.87 (71)
Proximity to Pacoima (1973)[1]	.68 (70)	1.34 (87)
Perceived likelihood of neighborhood desegregation (1973)[2]	1.84 (93)	.94 (43)
Fear of black violence		
Proximity to Pacoima (1969)[1]	.32 (53)	-.26 (71)
Proximity to Pacoima (1973)[1]	.03 (70)	1.20 (88)
Interracial social contact		
Perceived likelihood of neighborhood desegregation (1973)[2]	.57 (96)	.96 (43)
Economic resentments of blacks		
Perceived likelihood of being affected by affirmative action (1973)[2]	-.03 (79)	.20 (87)
Perceived likelihood of having black supervisor (1973)[3]	.74 (113)	.18 (120)

1. Adjacent vs distant

2. Very likely vs unlikely

3. Likely vs unlikely

Note. Entry in each case is b, the unstandardized regression coefficient The figure in parentheses is the number of respondents in each category of vulnerability.

Table 10

Impact of Personal Discontents on Symbolic Racism
Among Respondents High and Low in
Vulnerability to Blacks (entries are b's)

Area of Discontent	Area of Vulnerability	Vulnerability	Expressive Racism High	Expressive Racism Low	Busing High	Busing Low
Community						
	Proximity to Pacoima (1969)[1]		.03	-.12	-.09	.02
	Proximity to Pacoima (1973)[1]		.08	.12	.25	.04
	Likelihood of Desegregation (1973)[2]		.15	-.09	.07	-.06
Personal Economic status						
	Likelihood of affirmative action (1973)[2]		-.66	-.40	-.03	.01
	Likelihood of black supervisor (1973)[3]		-.76	-.40	-.30	-.08
Neighborhood schools						
	Likelihood of white busing: parents[3]		-1.07	.37	-1.42	.31
	Likelihood of black busing: parents[3]		-.98	.85	-1.02	.49
	Likelihood of white busing: nonparents[3]		-1.10	.24	-.85	-.53
	Likelihood of black busing: nonparents[3]		-.93	.64	-.32	-.66
Personal safety						
	Proximity to Pacoima (1969)[1]		.17	-.18	-.17	-.14
	Proximity to Pacoima (1973)[1]		-.36	-.23	-.20	-.18

1. Adjacent vs distant

2. Very likely vs unlikely

3. Likely vs unlikely

Note. Entry in each case is b, the unstandardized regression coefficient
The figure in parentheses is the number of respondents for
each category of vulnerability

Table 11

Symbolic Racism Variance Accounted For (R^2) by Socialization

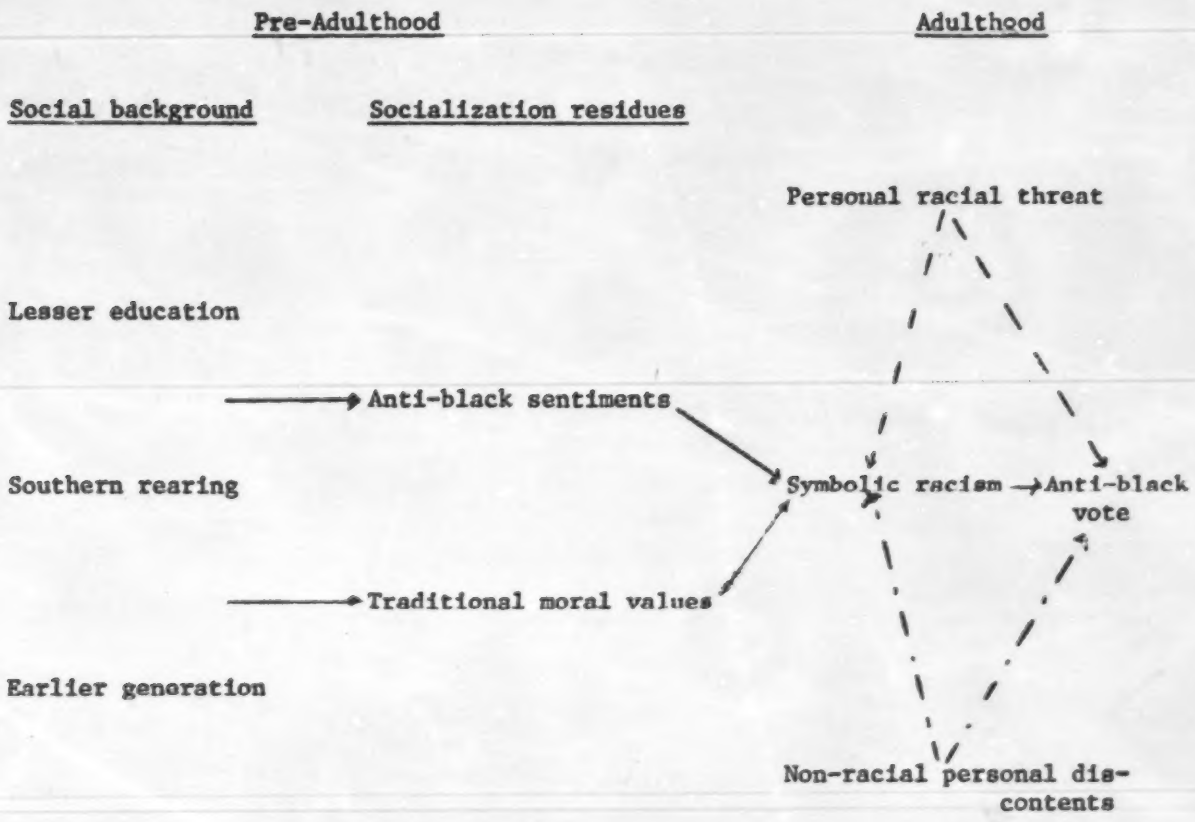
	Expressive Racism		Busing	
	1969	1973	1969	1973
Social Background	.14	.07	.08	.06
Region of origin[a]				
Parental SES[a]				
Age				
Education				
Current Social Location	.02	.01	.01	.01
SES				
Sex				
Residues of socialization	.12	.17	.09	.0
General Egalitarianism				
Traditional Values				
Total R^2	.28	.25	.18	.12
(Total R	.53	.50	.43	.35)
n	185	225	185	225

Note. The analyses were hierarchical multiple regressions. The latter two entries in each column indicate the increment in R^2 added by inclusion of those categories of independent variables.

a. Available only in 1973.

Figure Caption

Figure 1. Theoretical alternatives



symbolic racism/socialization

racial threat/realistic group conflict

nonracial discontent/displacement